



## Opening Question

*What do you request for the most when you pray?*

What about me? To a certain extent, we all look after our own interests. Even if we do something good for others, we still seek a payoff. Prayer is no different. When we pray, we want to direct God's attention towards our needs. But, in the Lord's Prayer our petitions ask for more than what we need. They help define our relationships with God and others.

In the Lord's Prayer, the last four petitions address the needs of the person in the context of faith.

## Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

The first of these petitions addresses not only sustenance but relationship. The phrase "give us" indicates our dependence on the Father, the one who gives us all good things. The phrase "this day" refers not only to this twenty four hour period. As St. Paul echoed the words of Isaiah:

*In the Scripture, God says,*

*"In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you."*

*I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.*

*2 Corinthians 6:2 (Isaiah 49:8)*

In other words, this day is the time of God's activity.

Our daily bread also means more than the nourishment our bodies need for health and growth. If the day can refer to the time of God's presence and activity, so can bread. Jesus told the crowd:

*I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If someone eats this bread, he will live forever. Indeed, the bread I will give is my flesh that will give true life to the world."*

*John 6:50bc*



## Forgive Us Our Trespasses As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us.

This petition focuses on two aspects of the human condition. First, we're not perfect. We harm others whether we mean to or not. So, we need forgiveness to help us correct our shortcomings and restore our relationships. Second, to truly receive the full effects of forgiveness, we need to forgive others. If we don't reconcile with others, the forgiveness we receive will only be on a surface level. It will not heal our hearts. But if we receive forgiveness as a gift, we can extend it to others. Jesus told his disciples:

*As you have freely received freely give.*

*Matthew 10:8b*

## Lead Us Not Into Temptation

This petition actually has two different meanings. On the surface, it asks God to save us from situations of moral testing. But, on a deeper level, it asks God to strengthen our resolve in times of testing. Temptation is the ground of spiritual struggle. It is the time and place where we choose between good and evil. Ironically, when we pray for spiritual strength like this petition, we are already making the moral choice for God.

## **But Deliver Us From Evil**

In a way, this petition echoed the previous one. Just as we prayed for strength in the spiritual battle, we pray for deliverance from evil personified: the devil. But, it is more than freedom from the devil's presence. It means liberation from his influence. It is an openness to God and others not a self-centered focus. It's a prayer for salvation and reconciliation. It's a realization that, by myself, I can't do it alone. It's understanding I need more than myself. I need God and others.

## **For Thine Is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory, Now and Forever. Amen.**

For many Christians, this passage ends the prayer. It's an expression of praise known as a doxology. While the best Gospel manuscripts we have do not contain this phrase, there are many indications it was used in the early Church. In a way, it acts as a final bookend. The prayer began with God in the phrase "Our Father" and the first three petition. Now, it ends with God by recognizing him as the Almighty.

The last four petitions found in the Lord's Prayer are directed towards our needs. But they are much deeper than physical sustenance, restored relationships, or deliverance from tough times. They speak to the very heart of personal faith. Yes, they are about us but they place us in the context of a believing community and a loving God. At its core, the Lord's Prayer is not only a plea for God to be present. It is a realization the Father is present. In the life he gives us daily. In the mercy he showers on us. And in the strength he gives us to win the moral battles. In response, we hail him:

*For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory, now and forever. Amen.*

## **Closing Prayer**

*How does the Lord's Prayer help you focus on the presence of God?*

*Reference to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs CCC 2838-2865*

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